

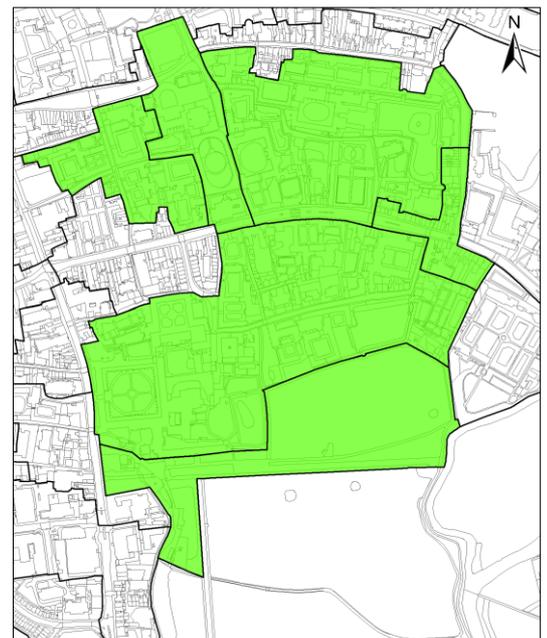
**HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER AREA 32:
EASTERN COLLEGES - TURL STREET COLLEGES**

The HUCA is located within broad character Zone K: The eastern colleges.

The broad character zone comprises of the eastern part of the historic city which is dominated by the enclosed quadrangles, gardens and monumental buildings of the medieval and post-medieval University and colleges.

Summary characteristics

- Dominant period: Late medieval-19th century.
- Designations: Twenty-five Grade I, two Grade II*, sixteen Grade II listings. Conservation Area.
- Archaeological Interest: Significant potential for Late Saxon to post medieval activity. Survival may be variable where modern redevelopment or substantial below ground activity is recorded. Previous investigations have demonstrated the potential for previously unrecorded historic built fabric to survive in the colleges covered over by later materials.
- Character: Enclosed medieval colleges and post-medieval colleges with glimpsed views from Late Saxon-medieval streets.
- Spaces: Open space is rare in this character area with buildings and substantial stone walls fronting directly onto the road while green spaces are limited to internal quadrangle spaces.
- Road morphology: Late Saxon rectilinear street network (and late 17th century extension of Turl Street across the unfilled town ditch)
- Plot morphology: large rectilinear post -medieval college plots.
- The character area lies on the central ridge of the Summertown-Radley Second Gravel Terrace at a height of around 64-65m OD.
- Survival of townscape elements:
 - Medieval and post-medieval college quadrangles.
 - Multiple medieval-modern listed buildings.
 - Late Saxon to medieval street network.



The eastern colleges (Zone K)

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HUCA 31

OAP Characterisation

Historic urban character area showing modern urban landscape character types.

- Cobbled surface in Brasenose Lane which retains historic central surface drain known as 'The Kennel'
- Victorian style street lights and lanterns affixed to walls.

Description

The character area is located in the centre of the city and is characterised by small enclosed colleges (Lincoln, Exeter, Jesus, Brasenose) dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods with smaller modern additions. The built character comprises a mixture of medieval to modern collegiate purpose built structures built around primary and later quadrangles and orientated on the rectilinear street pattern of Late Saxon origin.

The quadrangles are usually of three storeys (with post-medieval third storeys often added to late medieval and early post-medieval two storey arrangements) with associated kitchens, chapels, libraries, halls and student accommodation organised around individual staircases. Views looking into the colleges are limited through gateways and small areas of railings and there are no public open spaces. The college precincts have largely removed the medieval tenement patterns in this character area.

Tree cover is limited to a small number of distinctive mature trees located in college yards and gardens. The quadrangles contain neat manicured lawns.



Listed buildings by date of earliest identified fabric (based on listing description)

Historical value- means of connecting with the past

A defended burh laid out with a sub-rectilinear street grid was established at Oxford by the early 10th century. Following the Norman Conquest the town enjoyed a period of economic growth centred on the cloth trade until the late 13th century and 14th century when the town entered a period of economic decline. The 12th and 13th century saw the emergence religious and secular teaching, the formation of the University, of numerous individual academic halls and in the 13th century the development of more formal endowed colleges. Approximately one hundred and fifty academic halls are recorded in the city between 1200 and 1400. The 14th century marked the expansion of the college system, with colleges taking advantage of weakened land values caused by the decline of the cloth trade, plague and the vacuum left by the expulsion of the Jewish Community in 1290. In the 14th century many early intramural colleges extended their precincts and new college foundations were created, for example Exeter College in 1314. Many colleges were founded around existing academic halls, often located away from the more expensive principal streets which fronted onto the market. The 15th century saw a slower rate of college foundation as the existing colleges began to consolidate their endowments and develop monumental building programmes, limiting the availability of land for new colleges. Only Lincoln College was founded in the first half of the 15th century within the town centre. At the close of the

medieval period new foundations included Brasenose College in 1511 and Jesus College established in 1571. Many of the colleges subsequently underwent major redevelopment in the post-medieval period. Exeter College for example expanded to the north across the city defences and Brasenose created a new Quadrangle fronting the High Street in the late 19th century.

This character area allows for the appreciation of the late medieval expansion of small and medium sized colleges in the eastern part of the city.

Evidential value- potential to yield primary evidence

This character area has a high potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains relating to the town defences and domestic, commercial and manufacturing activity within the town. It also has the potential to preserve significant evidence for the material culture and diet of the medieval and post-medieval colleges.

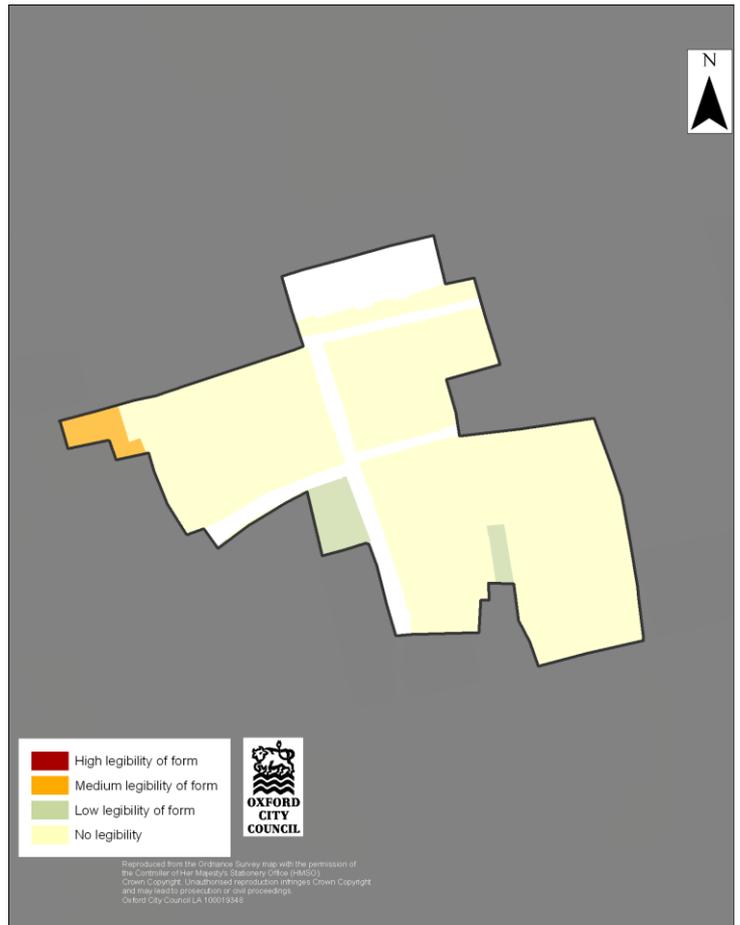
The character area includes exceptional medieval and post-medieval built fabric which has significant potential to reveal further information about the evolution of the colleges.

The Urban Archaeological Database records sixty archaeological events recorded in this character area. Previous archaeological investigations have recorded evidence for Late Saxon domestic activity, for the medieval defences, and for medieval and post medieval rubbish pits, vaults and drains that have provided evidence for college material culture and diets. Post-medieval wall paintings have been uncovered at Brasenose and Jesus College. The medieval kitchen at Lincoln College is notable as an important survival of a detached medieval kitchen and one of the few still in use..

Aesthetic value- sensory and intellectual stimulation

This character area has exceptional aesthetic qualities, derived from the monumental architecture of the four stone built enclosed colleges, each of which are comprised of two or more small regular quadrangles. The narrow streets and high density of college buildings forming tall continuous street frontages contribute to the enclosed character of the area. The character area typifies the 'Oxford experience' of narrow streets surrounded by tall stone college walls with glimpsed views of enclosed quadrangles. The character area contains numerous buildings of architectural merit.

The 15th century saw the existing colleges add more expansive stone ranges to institutions often



Assessment of medieval tenement survival



Turl Street looking south

formed around timber halls. Lincoln College is an example of a coherent planned 15th century college, employing the established quadrangular plan and reflecting the inward locking protective character of a contemporary gentlemen's country house (Tyack 1998). The continuing adherence to gothic design into the 19th century is exemplified by Brasenose College and its 1881-1911 'Victorian gothic' quadrangle that extended the historic college south to the High Street frontage. The chapel at Exeter College, built 1856-9 to a design by George Gilbert Scott is another notable Victorian Gothic structure, the small spire of which makes a notable contribution to the Oxford skyline. In contrast to the dominant stone built gothic quadrangles, a small number of modern structures have been inserted into the historic precincts, notably the 1959 modernist block of student rooms designed by Powell and Moya for Brasenose College.

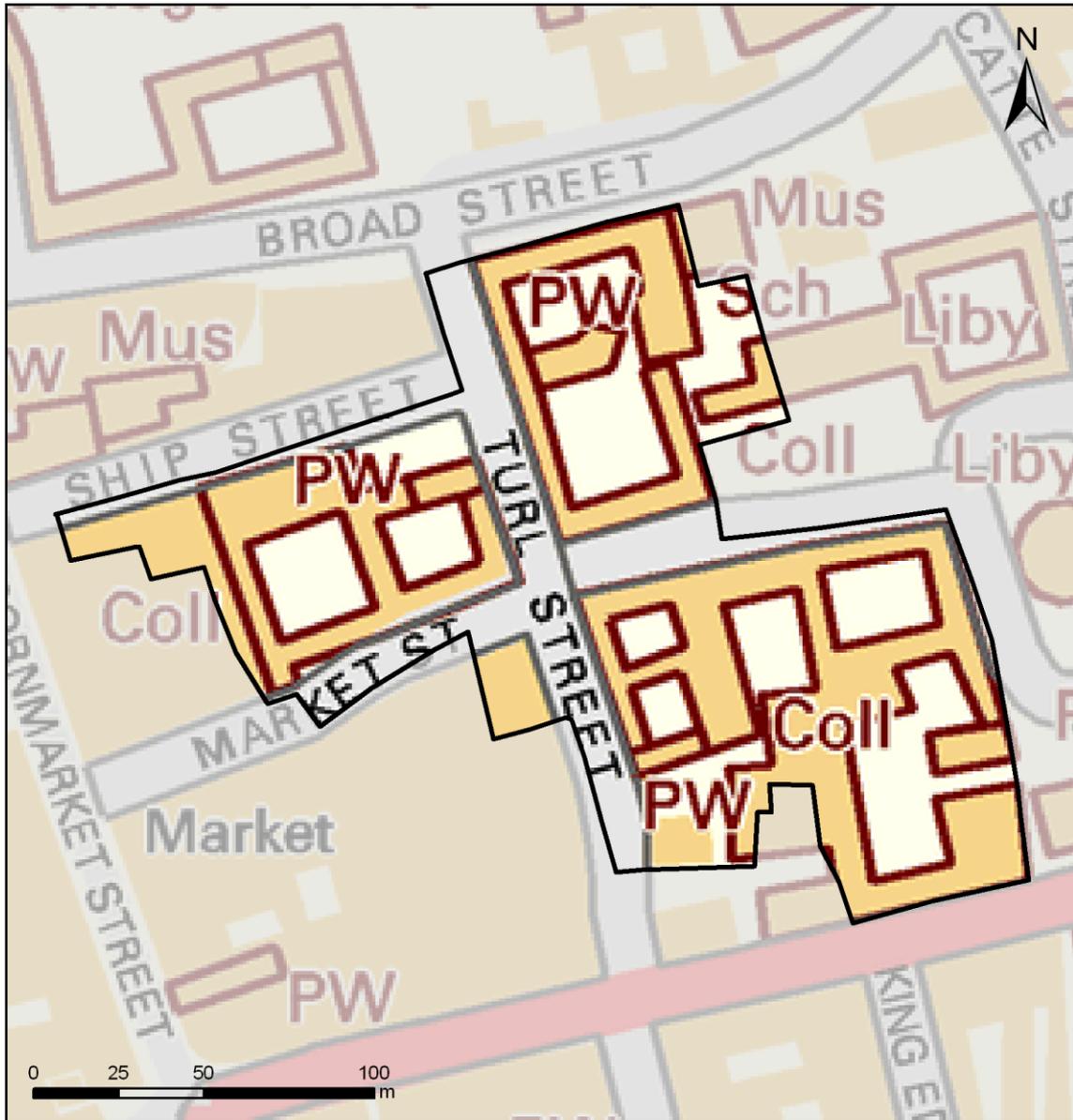
Communal value- meaning for collective experience and memory

As a historic centre of learning and as a thoroughfare for visitors moving between the High Street and Broad Street, this character area has strong communal value, although access to the colleges is restricted.

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Turl Street looking north



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HUCA 32 Orientation map

